

Dell SupportAssist OS Recovery

User's Guide



Notes, cautions, and warnings

 **NOTE:** A NOTE indicates important information that helps you make better use of your product.

 **CAUTION:** A CAUTION indicates either potential damage to hardware or loss of data and tells you how to avoid the problem.

 **WARNING:** A WARNING indicates a potential for property damage, personal injury, or death.

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Introduction

Dell SupportAssist OS Recovery is a recovery environment that consists of a set of tools that enable you to diagnose and troubleshoot issues that may occur prior to the start up of your computer. When your computer is unable to start up the operating system, your computer automatically starts the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment. The recovery environment enables you to diagnose hardware issues, repair your computer, back up your files, or restore your computer to factory state. If necessary, you can also manually start the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment at any time.

This document provides information about using the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment to diagnose and fix issues with the start up of your computer.

Topics:

- [Systems with SupportAssist OS Recovery](#)
- [Key features](#)
- [What is new in this release](#)

Systems with SupportAssist OS Recovery

SupportAssist OS Recovery is available only on certain Dell Inspiron, Dell XPS, and Dell Vostro computers that run a Dell factory-installed Microsoft Windows 10 operating system. For the complete list of system where SupportAssist OS Recovery is available, see the [Dell SupportAssist OS Recovery Support Matrix](#).

⚠ CAUTION: Formatting the hard drive of your computer deletes the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

Key features

The key features of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment are:

- Hardware scan — You can run a diagnostic scan on your computer to detect hardware issues.
- Repair your system — You can fix common issues that prevent your computer from starting up. System repair enables you to avoid the need to restore the factory image on your computer.
- Back up files — You can create a copy of your personal files on an external storage device.
- Factory Image Restore — You can restore the operating system and default applications to the state they were in when your computer was shipped from the Dell factory.

What is new in this release

- Access to all available tools from the SupportAssist OS Recovery home page.
- Addition of a hardware scan tool that enables you to detect hardware issues that prevent the start up of your computer.
- Addition of a system repair tool that enables you to fix common issues that prevent the start up of your computer.
- Requirement to log in to the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment only for backing up personal files.
- Support for logging in to the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment by using a local system administrator account.
- Send feedback to Dell about the SupportAssist OS Recovery application.

Using SupportAssist OS Recovery

The SupportAssist OS Recovery environment enables you to diagnose and fix issues with the start up of your computer. You can also use the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment to back up your personal files. The SupportAssist OS Recovery environment starts automatically when your computer fails to start the operating system after repeated attempts. You can also manually start the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment, if necessary.

Topics:

- [SupportAssist OS Recovery home page](#)
- [Scanning the hardware](#)
- [Repairing your system](#)
- [Backing up your personal files](#)
- [Restoring your computer to factory state](#)
- [Sending feedback to Dell](#)
- [Setting up internet connectivity](#)
- [Manually starting SupportAssist OS Recovery](#)
- [SupportAssist OS Recovery user interface](#)

SupportAssist OS Recovery home page

The SupportAssist OS recovery home page displays the following options:

- **Scan Hardware** — Perform scan to identify hardware issues, if any.
- **Repair System** — Fix issues that prevent the start up of your computer.
- **Back up files** — Back up your personal files on an external storage device.
- **Factory Image Restore** — Restore the operating system and default applications to factory state.

Scanning the hardware

Prerequisite

Your computer must be connected to a power outlet.

About this task

The **Scan hardware** tool enables you to run diagnostic tests that identify hardware issues. This tool scans the battery, cable, hard-drive, fan, and memory to detect issues, if any.

Steps

- 1 On the **SupportAssist OS Recovery** home page, click the **Scan Hardware** tile.
- 2 Click **Scan Now**.
 - If no hardware issue is detected, the **No issues detected** status is displayed.
 - If a hardware issue is detected, the issue details page is displayed. Make note of the issue details and follow the instructions on the page to request for support.
- 3 Click **Done**.

Repairing your system

Prerequisite

Your computer must be connected to a power outlet.



About this task

The **Repair System** tool enables you to diagnose and fix common issues that prevent the start up of your computer. This tool checks and fixes the Partition table, boot files, and the health of the Windows operating system.

Steps

- 1 On the **SupportAssist OS Recovery** home page, click the **Repair System** tile.
- 2 Click **Repair Now**.
 - If the issue is fixed successfully, the **Repair Complete** status is displayed. To restart the system, click **Restart**.
 - If the issue cannot be fixed or the repair is unsuccessful, an appropriate message is displayed. You can click **Backup & Restore** to back up your personal files and restore the operating system to factory state.

Backing up your personal files

Prerequisites

- Your computer must be connected to a power outlet.
- You must have an external storage device such as an SD card, USB key, or USB hard-drive to back up your files.

About this task

You can use the **Back up files** option to back up your personal files before you proceed to restore your computer to factory state. Before you back up your personal files, you are required to log in to the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment. To log in to the SupportAssist OS Recovery, you can use either a local account or a Microsoft Account. If you are logging in using your Microsoft Account, ensure that you have set up the internet connection settings. For instructions to set up internet connectivity, see [Setting up internet connectivity](#).

Steps

- 1 In the SupportAssist OS Recovery home page, click **Back up files**.

The login page displays the local administrator and Microsoft user accounts that are available on the system.
- 2 Click a user account and enter the user name and password in appropriate field, and then press Enter.

The files and folders on your computer are analyzed and the file count and the file size of the default Windows libraries are displayed.

NOTE: The file count and file size that are displayed may be greater than those of your user account because the Windows libraries contain files of all users of your system.

- 3 Do one of the following:
 - Select the folders that you want to back up and click **Next**.
 - To include or exclude specific files and folders for backup, click **Custom**. The **Custom Settings** page is displayed.
 - 1 To include files or folders for the backup, select the check box next to the files or folders. To exclude files or folders for the backup, clear the check box next to the files or folders.
 - 2 Click **Next**.

The free space required to back up the selected files is displayed and you are prompted to connect or insert a storage device to your computer.

- 4 Connect an external USB storage device, or insert an SD card.

The free space available on the storage device and the space required to back up the selected files is displayed.

NOTE: If the free space available on the storage device is lesser than the required free space, an appropriate error message is displayed.

- 5 Click **Next**.

The backup process begins and may take several minutes to complete. When the backup process is complete, an appropriate message is displayed. The backup that you created is located in a folder named **SupportAssist_Backups**. Within this folder, you can find a folder created with your backup that has the backup date and time in the folder name, for example, **Year-Month-Day_Hour.Minute.Second**. For instructions to restore your data, see the **readme.html** file that is available in the folder.

NOTE: If certain files could not be copied during the back up process, an error message is displayed with the list of files that were not copied.

Restoring your computer to factory state

Prerequisite

Your computer must be connected to a power outlet.

About this task

CAUTION: Using Factory Image Restore permanently deletes all data on the hard drive and removes any programs or drivers that you installed on your computer. Dell recommends that you back up the data before performing Factory Image Restore. Use Factory Image Restore only if Windows System Restore did not resolve your operating system problem.

You can use the **Factory Image Restore** option to restore your operating system and default applications to the state they were in when your computer was shipped from the Dell factory.

Steps

- 1 In the **SupportAssist OS Recovery home page**, click **Factory Image Restore**.
The **Factory Image Restore** screen is displayed.
- 2 Click **Next**.
The **Backup** screen is displayed.
- 3 Do one of the following:
 - If you have already backed up your personal files or if you do not want to back up your personal files, click **Skip**.
 - If you want to back up your personal files before the **Factory Image Restore** process, click **Backup** and follow the instructions on the screen.
- 4 Select **I understand that running a factory restore deletes all files and reformat my hard drive** and click **Next**.
The Factory Image Restore process begins and may take several minutes to complete. When the Factory Image Restore is complete, an appropriate message is displayed.
- 5 Click **Finish** to restart your computer.

Next step

Reinstall applications that were originally not installed on your computer.

Sending feedback to Dell

The **Give Feedback** option enables you to provide feedback to Dell about the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment. Your feedback will remain confidential and will allow Dell to make product improvements. You can access the **Give Feedback** option, either before or after you run a tool.

Prerequisite

You must have set up the internet connection settings in SupportAssist OS Recovery. For instructions to set up internet connectivity, see [Setting up internet connectivity](#).

Steps

- 1 Click **Give Feedback**.
The feedback page is displayed.
- 2 For questions 1 and 2, select the most appropriate option.
- 3 For question 3, select the category of additional feedback that you want to provide and enter your feedback in the appropriate field.
- 4 To allow Dell to use your feedback anonymously, select **Publish my feedback online (anonymously)**.
- 5 Click **Send Feedback**.

Setting up internet connectivity

An active internet connection is required to log in to the Support Assist OS Recovery environment using a Microsoft Account and for sending feedback to Dell. The **Network** page displays a visual network map and indicates the connection state of your computer to the local network and the internet. After you set up the internet connection, SupportAssist OS Recovery saves the network configuration settings for future connections.



Setting up a wireless internet connection

Prerequisite

The wireless modem or router must be turned on and placed near the computer for easy detection.

Steps

- 1 Click the network icon at the top-right of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

The **Network** page is displayed.

- 2 Select **Wireless**.

NOTE: If your device is unable to detect a wireless network adapter, an appropriate message is displayed. To resolve the issue, verify if the wireless network adapter is disabled in your computer settings.

A list of all the available wireless internet connections is displayed.

- 3 In the **Select a network** section, select the wireless internet connection you want to configure and connect.
- 4 Enter the corresponding network security key and then click **Connect**.

NOTE: If you want SupportAssist OS Recovery to connect automatically to the selected wireless internet connection, select **Connect automatically**.

The selected wireless internet connection is configured in SupportAssist OS Recovery and the **Connected** status is displayed.

- 5 Click **Done**.

Setting up a wired internet connection

Prerequisite

The network cable must be connected to your computer.

Steps

- 1 Click the network icon at the top-right of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

The **Network** page is displayed.

- 2 Select **Wired**.

SupportAssist OS Recovery automatically displays the **IP Address**, **Subnet Mask**, **Router**, and **DNS Server** details of the wired internet connection.

- 3 If you want to manually configure your internet connection, select **DHCP** as **Manual** and enter the **IP Address**, **Subnet Mask**, **Router**, and **DNS Server** details and then click **Apply**.
- 4 Click **Done**.

Manually starting SupportAssist OS Recovery

About this task

You can manually start the SupportAssist OS Recovery at any time to back up your personal files or to restore your computer to the factory state.

Steps

- 1 Turn on or restart your computer.
- 2 When the Dell logo is displayed, press F12.

NOTE: If you wait too long and the operating system logo appears, continue to wait until you see the Windows desktop, then restart your computer and try again.

The available boot options are displayed.

- 3 Select **SupportAssist OS Recovery** and press Enter.
- 4 The **SupportAssist OS Recovery** home page is displayed.

SupportAssist OS Recovery user interface

The Support Assist OS Recovery environment allows you to perform your tasks using a mouse, keyboard, or the touchscreen. At the top of each SupportAssist OS Recovery page a banner is displayed. The banner displays the current time and battery status—only on laptops.

The help icon which is also displayed on every page allows you to access help topics that are relevant to your current context.

The following SupportAssist OS Recovery features are unique to certain screens:

- Home icon — The home icon is only displayed when you are performing a task such as backing up your files. You can use the home icon to return to the home page to start over or to access a different function.
- Power options — The power options are available on the home and login pages. The power options that are available on the login and home pages are as follows:
 - Login page:
 - Shutdown — Turns off your computer
 - Restart — Turns off and then turns on your computer to boot again to the main operating system.
 - Windows RE — Provides you the ability to boot to the Windows Recovery Environment
 - Home page:
 - Log off — Ends the session of the current user and navigates to the login screen so that you can log in, if necessary, using a different user account.
 - Shutdown — Turns off your computer
 - Restart — Turns off and then turns on your computer to boot again to the main operating system.
 - Windows RE — Provides you the ability to boot to the Windows Recovery Environment



SupportAssist OS Recovery Settings

The SupportAssist OS Recovery environment starts automatically when your computer fails to start up the operating system after repeated attempts. You can configure the following for the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment based on your preference:

- Enable or disable the automatic start of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.
- Set the failure threshold for the automatic start of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

Topics:

- [Enabling or disabling the automatic start of SupportAssist OS Recovery](#)
- [Setting the failure threshold for the automatic start of SupportAssist OS Recovery](#)

Enabling or disabling the automatic start of SupportAssist OS Recovery

About this task

By default, the automatic start of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment is enabled. If necessary, you can disable the automatic start of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

Steps

- 1 Turn on or restart your computer.
- 2 When the Dell logo is displayed, press F2 to enter System Setup.

NOTE: If you wait too long and the operating system logo appears, continue to wait until you see the Windows desktop, then restart your computer and try again.

- 3 On the left pane, expand **SupportAssist System Resolution** and select **SupportAssist OS Recovery**.
- 4 On the right pane, select or clear the **SupportAssist OS Recovery** check box to enable or disable the automatic start of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.
- 5 Press F10 to save changes and exit.

Setting the failure threshold for the automatic start of SupportAssist OS Recovery

About this task

By default, your computer starts the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment automatically if it fails to start up the operating system on two consecutive attempts. If necessary, you can configure the failure threshold for the automatic start up of the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

Steps

- 1 Turn on or restart your computer.
- 2 When the Dell logo is displayed, press F2 to enter System Setup.

NOTE: If you wait too long and the operating system logo appears, continue to wait until you see the Windows desktop, then restart your computer and try again.

- 3 On the left pane, expand **SupportAssist System Resolution** and select **Auto OS Recovery Threshold**.
- 4 On the right pane, select one of the following:
 - **OFF** — To disable the automatic start of the SupportAssist System Resolution and SupportAssist OS Recovery environments.

- **1** — To automatically start the recovery environment after a single failure.
 - **2** — To automatically start the recovery environment after two failures.
 - **3** — To automatically start the recovery environment after three or more failures.
- 5 Press F10 to save changes and exit.



Troubleshooting SupportAssist OS Recovery

Troubleshooting user accounts

When the **SupportAssist OS Remediation** service is disabled or uninstalled or is not responding in your main operating system, there are no user accounts available for you to log in or the available user account does not allow you to log in with the entered password.

Prerequisite

You must be able to boot to your main operating system.

Steps

- 1 Start your computer and log in to the main operating system.
- 2 Right-click the Windows icon, and then click **Computer Management**.
- 3 Go to **Service and Applications** and then click **Services**.
- 4 Right-click the **Dell SupportAssist Remediation** service and then click **Start**.

Installing SupportAssist OS Remediation service from your main operating system

If the **SupportAssist OS Remediation** service is either not responding or is not installed, follow the steps to troubleshoot:

Prerequisite

You must be able to boot to your main operating system.

Steps

- 1 Start your computer and log in to the main operating system.
- 2 Right-click the Windows icon, and then click **Control Panel**.
- 3 Go to **Programs** and then click **Uninstall a program**.
- 4 Check if **Dell SupportAssist Remediation** service has been uninstalled. If it is installed, uninstall **Dell SupportAssist Remediation** service.
- 5 Open your web browser and visit Dell.com/support/SupportAssist.
- 6 Download the **SupportAssist OS Recovery reinstall package** and then install.

Downloading the operating system media from Dell on another computer

If you are unable to start your computer and log in to the main operating system, you can try to reimage your computer with Microsoft Push-Button Reset. After you reimage, you can download the operating system media from Dell on another computer.

- 1 Click the power icon, and then click **Windows RE**.
The Windows recovery environment is displayed.
- 2 In the **Choose an option**, click **Troubleshooting** and then click **Reset your PC**.
- 3 Choose to keep your files or to remove your files completely from your device.
Your computer restarts and the reimaging process begins.
- 4 Follow the instructions that are displayed on the screen.
Your computer is now successfully reimaged.

- 5 Open your web browser and visit Dell.com/support/home.
- 6 Locate your product by either entering the Service Tag of your computer or by browsing for a specific computer model.
- 7 Click **Drivers and Downloads**.
- 8 Under the **Operating system** category, click **Download the Windows Recovery image**.
A validation code is displayed on your screen.
- 9 Enter the Service Tag of your computer and the validation code displayed on your screen.
- 10 Read the **Terms and Conditions** and click **Agree** if you agree to all the terms and conditions and then click **Download**.
The operating system media is successfully downloaded.

Troubleshooting the Backup icon

The **Backup files** tile may be disabled if an encryption program that is installed on your computer is trying to protect the main operating system.

Prerequisite

You must be able to boot to your main operating system.

Steps

- 1 Start your computer and log in to the main operating system.
- 2 Disable the encryption software.
The **Backup files** tile is enabled.

Troubleshooting OS Recovery boot failure

When SupportAssist System Resolution is disabled in the BIOS, you will not be able to access the SupportAssist OS Recovery environment.

- 1 Restart your computer.
- 2 When the Dell logo is displayed on the screen, press the F2 key until the **Preparing to enter setup** message is displayed.
- 3 In the BIOS section, expand **SupportAssist System Resolution**.
- 4 Ensure that:
 - The **Auto OS Recovery Threshold** is not set to **Off** and has a value of 1, 2 or 3 selected.
 - The **SupportAssist OS Recovery** option is selected.

Troubleshooting file backup errors

After the backup is complete, the file errors are listed. When files of size greater than 4 GB are backed up, files are sent to a drive formatted in the FAT32 file system. Before you back up the files of size greater than 4 GB, format your backup drive using another computer to use exFAT or NTFS format. You can also use another drive that is formatted in either exFAT or NTFS format. Backup errors may also occur when sectors of the hard-drive used for backup are corrupted.

Steps

- 1 Go to the SupportAssist OS Recovery home screen and open the backup utility.
- 2 Click **Custom** and select the files that previously had errors.
- 3 Select your destination storage media to back up the selected files and begin the backup.

Next step

After trying the steps to troubleshoot file backup errors, if the error occurs again, run the diagnostics test. For steps on how to run the diagnostics test, see [Running the diagnostics test](#).

Running the diagnostics test

SupportAssist OS Recovery helps you to diagnose any issue that you may occur while starting up the system.

- 1 Go to the SupportAssist OS Recovery home page.
- 2 Click the power icon and then click **Restart**.



- 3 When the Dell logo is displayed, press the F12 key until the **One time boot** menu is displayed.
- 4 Go to **Scan Hardware** and press Enter.
The diagnostics test starts automatically.



Frequently asked questions

When I reimage my hard drive, will it affect the SupportAssist OS Recovery partition?

SupportAssist OS Recovery partition is removed if you reimage by using a standard OS media or the USB key. After the partition is removed, there is no option to install SupportAssist OS Recovery.

How much space does the SupportAssist OS Recovery occupy on my hard drive?

SupportAssist OS Recovery occupies approximately 900 MB of your hard drive space.

Is there any Dell service entitlement limitation to use SupportAssist OS Recovery?

To use SupportAssist OS Recovery, you need not have any specific Dell service entitlement.

My computer is in an out of warranty state. Can I still use SupportAssist OS Recovery?

If your computer is in an out-of-warranty state, you can still use SupportAssist OS Recovery. However, if you face any issues, you need to purchase a per-incident support agreement to receive technical support from Dell.

What operating systems are supported by SupportAssist OS Recovery?

Currently, SupportAssist OS Recovery supports Microsoft Windows 10 operating system only.

What storage formats are supported by SupportAssist OS Recovery?

SupportAssist OS Recovery supports USB Key, USB Hard disk drive (HDD), and Secure digital (SD) cards.

